

Shared laboratory space

Open labs and shared lab spaces have become a very common practice for research at ASU and other institutions as it allows for easy collaboration and lowers costs associated with building and maintaining laboratory research space. Common equipment can be made available to multiple researchers in shared lab spaces resulting in lower costs and greater utilization of assets. However, shared lab spaces may lead to problems when users of the shared spaces do not behave as good lab partners e.g. leaving shared resources unclean or in an unsafe condition. To address these potential problems Principle Investigators or their designees should conduct safety meetings with all personnel using the shared lab spaces to reinforce good lab safety practices.

What can I do?

We recommend the following items are covered in each shared lab space safety meeting:

- Always wear required personal protective equipment while in a shared space lab. This includes safety glasses or goggles, lab coat, appropriate gloves and closed toed shoes. While you personally may not be using hazardous materials in the shared space, someone else may.
- Ensure all containers for chemicals, hazardous waste or otherwise are properly labeled. This will reduce accidents and avoid confusion on the part of others trying to assist in the event of an accident.
- Know your lab specific safety rules and notify others in the shared lab space of potential hazards you are working with.
- Obtain permission before using a chemical or a piece of equipment belonging to another research group. Be sure to leave the equipment clean and in good condition. Notify the owner of any issues or concerns.
- Return chemical containers to their proper storage location when not in use. Ensure that flammable solvents are not placed into refrigerators unless specifically designed for that purpose.
- Verify all personnel in your lab understand emergency procedures including what to do if someone is injured or if there is a chemical spill.